



NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Brian Turmail
202/842-3600 x 222
bgturmail@aol.com

NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL FINDS THAT GOALS WORK – PROGRESS IS CLEAR AFTER A DECADE OF REFORM

*Education Panel Releases 1999 Annual Report, Celebrates Progress and Calls for Rededication
and Action to Achieve Education Goals*

WASHINGTON, DC (December 2, 1999) – The National Education Goals Panel today declared that the National Education Goals work. The Panel based its conclusion on data published in its annual reports and discussions during a special 10th anniversary conference in Washington. The Panel adopted an action statement rededicating itself to continue efforts for education reform. The education panel also released its annual report *The National Education Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners 1999* during a press conference today.

The Panel found that the Goals and the Goals Panel have helped the nation make progress over the last decade in five key ways by:

- Focusing education improvement efforts on results;
- Sustaining strong, broad-based support for education reform;
- Helping launch and support academic standards;
- Supplying comparable data that enabled states to monitor their progress toward the Goals and benchmark their education performance against the best in the nation and the world; and,
- Informing state and local efforts to improve educational performance, particularly in raising student achievement and improving learning environments for young children.

“The eve of the year 2000 and the 10-year anniversary of the National Education Goals is an appropriate time to reflect upon what has taken place,” said Governor Paul E. Patton (KY), chair of the National Education Goals Panel. “There is no doubt that the National Education Goals and Goals Panel have encouraged a broad spectrum of educators, parents, students, business and community leaders, policy makers and the public to work toward attainment of a better educational system.”

The NEGP reached its conclusion after a series of panel discussions and reviews of annual report data. Participants in the discussions included such noted education authorities as Hedrick Smith, Leo Estrada, Hugh Price, Sandra Feldman, Diane Ravitch, Sharon Lynn Kagan, Richard Elmore, Denis Doyle and Robert Wehling. This review process showed that the Goals clearly work.

-more-

The conclusions of the Panel were put forward in an action statement declaring that without education goals the nation would lose a comprehensive vision of the education results that Americans understand and want. The action statement also urged continuing education goals to provide the overarching framework to improve learning for all children through the next decade and beyond.

Based on its conclusions, the Goals Panel has committed to the following actions:

- To continue to work with policymakers to use the Goals in educational improvement strategies; and,
- To hold a series of field hearings during the coming year with the following objectives:
 - Identify promising and effective practices at the state and local levels that are producing demonstrable progress toward achieving the Goals; and,
 - Compile and share information with policymakers and education leaders to better inform their efforts toward Goal achievement.

“We applaud the accomplishments that have been made so far in working toward the National Education Goals and commend the students, teachers, parents and education leaders who are responsible for so much hard work,” said Patton. “We still have a long way to go.... The improvements called for in the National Education Goals are as important today as they were ten years ago. I urge every state to make them a priority and to build on the momentum toward their attainment.”

Findings of the 1999 Annual Report of the Goals Panel

The 1999 Goals Panel report *Building a Nation of Learners, 1999* contains new and updated data for a broad range of indicators that measure progress toward the eight National Education Goals. For the first time, the 1999 report includes state-by-state results on 8th grade reading and writing achievement. And, it includes national results for writing and civic achievement at the 4th, 8th and 12th grade levels. The report also contains updated information on a variety of indicators for Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

This new and updated information indicates that America is making progress toward the National Education Goals, both at the national and state levels. Nationally, the Goals Panel identified 12 areas where the United States made significant improvements. However, many of the Goals have yet to be met, and there is still a long way to go in many areas. Panel data identified five areas where there was evidence of decline.

“We have to recognize and celebrate the progress, not be satisfied for even one moment but realize that we do not need to get depressed because we have not met every Goal,” said Michigan Governor John Engler, a member of the National Education Goals Panel. “We need to understand that this is a long journey, the National Education Goals have worked wonderfully, they will continue to work well and they are going to continue to drive performance.”

-more-

At the state level, 23 states showed improvement on 10 or more measures. Leading the way were Colorado, Connecticut, Kentucky and North Carolina, all of which made significant improvements on 13 measures. Close behind with improvement on 12 measures were California, New York, South Carolina and Texas.

A breakdown of state accomplishments in the Goal areas during the 1990s is as follows:

Goal 1: Ready to Learn

- 37 states reduced the percentages of infants born with one or more of four health risks;
- 50 states increased the percentage of mothers receiving early prenatal care; and
- 49 states increased the proportion of children with disabilities who participated in preschool.

Goal 2: School Completion

- 12 states reduced their high school dropout rates in Grades 9-12; and
- 4 states increased the high school completion rate among 18- to 24-year-olds.
As of 1997, 17 states had met Goal 2 – a 90 percent high school completion rate or higher.

Goal 3: Student Achievement and Citizenship

- 27 states increased the percentage of public school 8th graders who are Proficient in mathematics; and
- 50 states increased the proportion of Advanced Placement examinations receiving a score high enough to qualify for college credit.

Goal 4: Teacher Education and Professional Development

- 17 states increased the percentages of public school teachers who reported that during their first year of teaching they received support from a master or mentor teacher;
- In every state the percentage of secondary school teachers holding certificates in their main teaching assignment is 89 percent or higher; and,
- Teacher participation in in-service and professional development programs was at 76 percent or higher in every state.

Goal 5: Mathematics and Science

- 15 states perform at “world class” levels in 8th grade science -- out of 41 nations, only Singapore would be expected to outperform these states;
- 51 states or territories increased the percentage of degrees earned by all students that were awarded in mathematics or science;
- 38 states increased the percentage of degrees earned by minority students that were awarded in mathematics and science; and,
- 51 states or territories increased the percentage of degrees earned by female students that were awarded in mathematics or science.

-more-

Goal 6: Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

- 39 states increased the percentage of high school graduates who immediately enrolled in college; and,
- 10 states increased voter registration.

Goal 8: Parental Participation

- 17 states increased the influence of parent associations on public school policy.

The Goals Panel report also found areas where the nation and the states must perform better in order to meet the Goals. Several indicators of progress toward Goal 7: Safe, Disciplined and Alcohol- and Drug-free Schools, showed declines in performance during the 1990s. At the national level, the percentage of students who reported using drugs has increased over time, as has the percentage of students who reported that someone tried to sell or give them drugs at school. Also, the percentage of public school teachers who reported being threatened or injured at school has increased during the 1990s. And, a higher percentage of secondary school teachers report disruptions in their classrooms that interfere with teaching. In addition, the percentage of secondary school teachers who hold a degree in their main teaching assignment, an indicator for Goal 4, has gone down over time.

“This should sound an alarm,” said Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating, a Panel member. “We cannot turn our back on this information. We must rededicate ourselves to change these trends.”

To download a copy of *The National Education Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners, 1999*, please visit the National Education Goals Panel web site, www.negp.gov.

About the National Education Goals Panel

Created in July 1990, the National Education Goals Panel is a bipartisan body of federal and state officials made up of eight governors, four members of Congress, four state legislators and two members appointed by the President.

The eight National Education Goals call for greater levels of: student achievement and citizenship; high school completion; teacher education and professional development; parental participation in the schools; literacy and lifelong learning; and safe, disciplined, and alcohol- and drug-free schools. The Goals also call for all children to be ready to learn by the time they start school and for US students to be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement by the year 2000.

###